From: Janey Bishoff
To: Siddiqui, Sumbul
Subject: Letter of Concern on an Important Upcoming Issue
Date: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 12:57:59 PM

April 17, 2018

Councilor Sumbul Siddiqui
Cambridge City Council
Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA

Dear Councilor Siddiqui:

As a longtime Boston area resident, an MIT alum, and a former planner working in Massachusetts state government, I know that Cambridge is a positive community, a leader in democratic values, and is considered a welcoming beacon of inclusion -- not only for citizens here in Massachusetts, but for people who come to Cambridge from across the country and throughout the world.

I am deeply concerned and dismayed hearing that the Cambridge City Council is considering a resolution to support a **boycott of HP** for doing business in Israel or with Israel's government.

There are many reasons that it is inappropriate for the City Council to become embroiled in such an issue. Most importantly you are opening yourselves up to being perceived as Anti-Semitic, given that the group behind this effort, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is, in the words of its leaders, dedicated to Israel's destruction, and further fuels hate and polarization, giving credence to those who reject the co-existence of Palestinians and Israelis.

I certainly hope that you reject this hatred and are aware of the many leaders, from the left, right, and center, who reject BDS, including former President Barack Obama; Senators Bernie Sanders, Cory Booker, Ed Markey, and Elizabeth Warren; Representatives Keith Ellison, Michael Capuano, and Joe Kennedy, former Senator John Kerry, former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, and all 50 governors.

I also understand that the City established a special relationship with Dongguan, China. Unfortunately human rights abuses against laborers in Dongguan's toy industry not only exist, but are well-documented. Therefore, you are also opening yourselves up to being called out as hypocritical by supporting the boycott of a company doing business with Israel, when you have made special efforts to reach out to a government that allows such human rights abuse.

Finally, there are many companies based in Cambridge, which do business in countries around the world with poor human rights records. It is likely that some of these companies also do business with the City of Cambridge and/or support the Cambridge schools and worthy non-profit organizations that help your citizens. Is the City Council going to support a boycott of those companies as well? This could put such support at risk – not to mention the tax revenue derived from such companies when they consider expansion, lease renewals, or relocation.

I hope that as Cambridge City Councilors you will continue to be leaders for all citizens and that beacon for democratic values by standing up for thoughtful leadership and high standards and reject the idea of supporting this boycott.

Sincerely yours,

Janey Bishoff

Janey Bishoff

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